DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 119 757 JC 760 150

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TITLE Veterans Military Service credit Survey; A Study of the Faculty.
INSTITUTION Bakersfield Coll., Calif.
PUB DATE Jan 76
NOTE 11p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Activity Learning; Associate Degrees; *College Credits; Community Colleges; *Junior Colleges; Learning Experience; Military Service; *Military Training; *Student Experience; Teacher Attitudes; *Veterans; Veterans Education
IDENTIFIERS Bakersfield College

ABSTRACT

Bakersfield College currently grants two units of elective credit to veterans for military service. In 1975 the Board of Representatives unanimously recommended that this be raised to six units of credit. This credit would be awarded on petition after completion of 12 units, for periods of service exceeding 181 days. The request was approved by the Academic Senate, but rejected in a referendum vote of the faculty. This study was conducted in fall 1975 to determine if faculty opinion was still against raising the military credit and to determine faculty opinion on each of the arguments for or against the credit extension. The questionnaire was sent to all 274 certificated faculty members; 144 (52.6 percent) responded. Results indicate that the respondents were overwhelmingly against the measure. Reaction to four of the five arguments in favor of granting the six units was basically negative. Only the argument that military service is an educational experience received more favorable than unfavorable responses. The general feeling was that automatically granting six units would lessen the value of the A.A. degree granted to veterans. Many faculty, however, would accept a plan which grants the two units and then will allow additional units for formal documented training offered in the service. (DC)

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VETERANS MILITARY SERVICE CREDIT SURVEY

A STUDY OF THE FACULTY
CONDUCTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

by

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January, 1976

JC 760 150

Introduction

Bakersfield College currently grants two units of elective credit to Veterans for military service. Last year the Board of Representatives unanimously recommended that this be raised to six (6) units of credit. This credit would be granted after completion of 12 units, upon petition, for periods of service exceeding 181 days. The request was approved by the Academic Senate, but rejected in a referendum vote of the faculty.

In October of 1975, Jerry Hill, student body President, contacted the office of Institutional Research concerning designing a questionnaire measuring faculty opinion on the question of Veterans military service credit. The purpose of the questionnaire was (1) to determine if faculty opinion was still against raising the military credit, and (2) to determine the faculty opinion on each of the basic arguments for or against the credit extension. In the survey, the arguments reproduced were those used by proponents and opponents of the measure during the faculty referendum campaign.

The nine-question instrument was sent on November 6 to the 274 certificated faculty members who were asked to return the instrument to Hill in an attached envelope. By December 1, 144 or 52.6% of the faculty members had returned the survey. The report that follows concerns the responses of these 144 faculty members.

Survey Results

When asked if they favored granting the raising of credit to Veterans from two units to six units, faculty responded as follows:

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	28	19.6
I have mixed feelings	27	18.9
No	88	61.5

When asked to react to plans alternative to the increase from two to six units, 75 faculty members marked the following:

Alternate Plan	Number	Percent
Grant more than 6 units	0	
Units granted should be more than 2 but less than 6	8	10.7
Eliminate all Veterans credit entirely	21	28.0
Other and/or revision of one of the three above	46	61.3

When asked to propose alternate plans, the main theme presented was selective credit given based on the quality or type of service. Many suggested either giving credit for service training or allowing Veterans to challenge courses for which they had received background. Sixteen of the 23 written responses indicated this point of view.

Some of these comments were:

"Evaluate Veterans record and assess units accordingly."

"Grant credit only if military training parallels college courses."

"Units beyond two granted for work experience study completed while in service."

"I feel that some Veterans do get education in the service but not all do. Any way to evaluate military service?"

"Give credit depending on service courses completed."

"Vets with special skills can presently challenge courses and receive recognition of educational experience but not units."

"Grant credit on individual basis for specific educational activities."

Reaction to four of the five arguments in favor of granting the six units was basically negative. Only the argument that military service is an educational experience received more favorable than unfavorable responses. Specifically, responses were as shown on next page.

Six units of credit should be given to Veterans because:

Reason	1 Definitely Agree		2 Agree		3 Have Mixed Feelings		4 Disagree		5 Definitely Disagree		Mean Average
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
of gratitude to them for service given to our country	13	10.8	5	4.2	15	12.5	36	30.0	51	42.5	3.9
the p-ecedent has been established - BC granted eight units of credit to World War II Veterans	11	9.9	13	11 7	20	18.0	31	27.9	36	32.4	3.6
granting the units will attract more students to BC	8	7.2	13	11.7	16	14.4	34	30.6	40	36.0	3.8
the six units is the average credit already given to Veterans by other California community colleges	12	12.0	11	11.0	21	21.0	29	29.0	27	27.0	3.5
military service is an educational experience often involving foreign travel, personal growth and maturity	29	25.4	24	21.1	20	17.5	19	16.7	22	19.3	2.8

Most of the comments were written to the gratitude reason or military service as an educational experience. Comments on the first were generally to the effect that giving units is an inappropriate way to show gratitude, and on the latter, that military service is not the only maturing experience.

Specifically, some comments were:

On all five arguments:

"The following 'arguments' could be used in a logic course as examples of logical fallacies. One does not 'disagree' with a fallacious argument, but brands it as specious." (marked all responses #5)

Because of gratitude to them for service given to our country:

"Allow credit for training that is equivalent to any course offered at BC."

"I feel gratitude but not as a function of college credit."

"Possibly true--but this has nothing to do with academic experience and therefore academic credit should not be given."

"I'm grateful but the GI bill is an ample way of showing it."

Because military service is an educational experience often involving foreign travel, personal growth and maturity:

"Agreed, but so are many other experiences. We should not single out military experience. Why not give units to a woman for the experience of having a baby--certainly educational and adds to maturity."

"So is childbirth, a trip to the whorehouse and a dose. Perhaps they, too, would qualify."

"So does employment in a productive job in society."

"True--but whether it can be appropriately equated with formal instruction in an academic institution is the real question."

Most faculty members agreed that granting of the six units would lessen the value of the A.A. degree granted Veterans. Specifically, responses were as follows:

	1 Definitely Agree		2 Agree		3 Have Mixed Feelings		4 Disagree		5 Definitely Disagree		Mean Average
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Six units should not be given because it cheapens degree	29	25.4	24	21.1	20	17.5	19	16.7	22	19.3	2.8

Sixty-one faculty members responded to an open-ended question which invited them to communicate any additional feelings they had concerning granting credit to Veterans for military service. Approximately one-quarter of the comments were favorable to the two to six unit increase, three-quarters were negative. Many (19) favored the idea of granting additional unit credit for military schools attended.

Comments could be categorized as follows:

Comment	Number	Percent
The Veteran deserves the 6 units credit	11	18.0
The credit extension should be given but only in proportion to the amount of time spent in the service.	4	6.6
Only grant additional credit for training or courses taken in military.	19	31.1
Credit should not be granted because it cheapens the degree and/or if you accept Veteran experience for credit, you should accept other of life's experiences.	16	26.2
Veterans already receive rewards from GI benefits which they are being paid to allow them to attend school.	6	9.8
If their training is applicable, Veterans can always challenge a course	4	6.6
The faculty has voted and the decision should stand.	1	1.6

Some of the specific comments were:

"Credit gave a great boost after W.W. II - can still be a great help today. All for it!"

"The service as I knew it (for 5 years during WW II) was definitely a maturing experience, and if academic training can be defined in any way as a maturing discipline, then I know that military experience qualifies for at least six units of credit. But it should be granted on the basis of 2 units/yr of service with maximum of 6."

"Veterans should receive equal treatment based on past experience in WW II and Korean War -- fairness demands it."

"I received 6 units as a Veteran (plus 7) when I started college and for more reasons then I have space to mention, I feel it is important. The 6 units were granted for basic training, plus 7 units were given for technical school."

"Veterans have had in most cases not only basic training, but in addition, advanced training, both formal schooling plus on-the-job training. I speak with 27 years active duty experience as an officer with the U.S. Marines including 6 years as Director of Training (Plans & Operations, G-3)."

"My ambiguity is caused, in part, by the 181 day clause in the proposal. My initial reaction is that a 6 month term of service would be too short a period to warrant six honorary units. However, a six month term could be, in some cases, more deserving of additional credit than a six year term. My feelings right now are that it depends entirely on what the individual did while in the military."

"I'm a 5-year veteran of World War II. As an officer, I was granted (given) 8 units of credit for subjects taught in Midshipman School--not for putting in time of service. Subjects taught had to be mastered and that is why 8 units toward a 4-year degree were granted. I'm opposed to handouts for Vets. When I enlisted in the service, I did so because I wanted to serve my country. Subsequently Vets benefits were provided--educational, low-cost interest notes for home buyers, etc. These benefits I inherited--but did not seek."

"I have traveled in foreign countries and seen a lot but it cannot be measured by academic standards! However, classes are given in the military which are taught by academic or classroom methods and are valuable. These are especially useful to veterans for vocational experience and training. Why not give so much credit for these classes rather than a 'blanket' credit system to everyone. (Possibly it involves too much 'red tape,' huh?)"

"Perhaps rather than granting units arbitrarily, students having specific training or experiences as a GI and enrolled in related programs should be allowed to petition for certain numbers of units. For example - an electrical technician could get units if he was in an electronics program."

"A Vet may or may not be deserving of academic credit depending upon his military training and experience. However, the credit should be given only if it meets the educational goals and objectives of the general education requirements in full!"

"Veterans should receive credit for educational schooling completed in the service, but they should receive no more than 2 units for a normal tour of duty (at least 2 years). Naturally Veterans who were in for longer terms probably would have gone to school while short terms would not. How many units of credit were given to Korean Veterans? Certainly this war would be comparable to the Vietnamese one, but neither was like World War II on my accounts."

"I feel that units should be awarded on an individual basis of 1 to 6 units. Each Veteran could petition to have his records (military) evaluated by a committee to determine how many units he would receive credit for. This would not be a gift but earned credits based on training, schooling, travel and related experiences. Nothing will be given to the Veterans, they will have earned it."

"Additional credit should be given Veterans for most service schools attended. Service schools are superior to most trade schools and equal to quite a few college courses."

"There are existing provisions which allow the student to challenge any course by examination. If a Veteran thinks he knows the course content, let him challenge it. A college is a place where education is supposed to take place and it irritates the hell out of me for people to try any means possible to get the credit while not taking advantage of the opportunity to get more education--in particular Veterans who are being paid while presumably making the attempt to gain such education."

"If a Veteran feels he has gained personally from his military experience, let us give him an opportunity to challenge courses. This is an opportunity that should be offered more often to more students. Just as every student does not benefit equally from a classroom experience, every Vet doesn't receive the same benefits from service experience."

"It is no question that we owe a debt of gratitude to Veterans for service given to our country. However, I feel that the best way of expressing that gratitude is via the monetary educational benefits already provided. In fact, I am in favor of increasing benefits according to a scale based upon performance, i.e., units completed and G.P.A. The more courses passed and the better the grades, the more financial assistance provided. As for attracting more students to BC, we no longer need to attract students to BC with the 5% growth cap just adopted. We do need to attract good students to BC and they are not usually the ones looking for easy ways to get through college. Military experience is indeed an educational experience often (but not always) involving foreign travel, personal growth and maturity. However, I don't believe we give credit to non-veterans for foreign travel, personal growth and maturity; non-veterans must show transcripts, certificates or pass examinations showing academic or vocational training or experience. If a Veteran had such training while in the military or had experiences enabling him to pass examinations for specific courses, then he should be given credit for those courses."

"They are already getting paid to go to school when many adults who are coming back are supporting complete families without extra stipends."

"If we keep granting units, removing the failing grades, lowering major requirements, soon the degree will be worth nothing. We can see this happening with our H.S. degree as it now appears the H.S.'s are not providing the basic skills for many Americans to operate or function in our society. We should not continue that poor practice on at this level."

"Perhaps we should grant six units to women who have survived pregnancy and childbirth. They have had to take time out from their studies to generate new life. Those who give birth surely should receive as much credit as those who bring death. The biological and psychological transformations that mothers undergo are usually profoundly maturing influences, especially when they are undergone involuntarily."

"I am a Vet. When colleges teach tank-driving and gun-shooting, then it would be appropriate to grant credit for military tank-driving and military gun-shooting. It would also be appropriate (in my ethics) to abolish colleges."

"I respect Veterans and strongly believe the government should help them with GI education benefits to enable them to pay tuition and buy books. But to give an additional reward in form of units discriminates against other students who may also have had valuable personal growth experiences yet who do not have any organization to apply leverage for them. The role of a college is to acknowledge a limited form of learning or training over which it has exercised some control and set some standards. It ought not to acknowledge general learning over which it has had no control. That steps beyond its proper scope and function. Learning equivalent to courses of study should be measured by challenge exams and appropriate credit granted when the knowledge is so demonstrated."

"I originally voted in favor of the granting of the six units, mainly because it seemed to me that not to do so was an act of discrimination against this particular group of Veterans who are, as far as I'm concerned, no more or less worthy than other Veterans of whatever benefits have been offered in the past. On reflection, however, I've come to the conclusion that previous benefits of this sort were granted in a different academic atmosphere than today, and that this makes appeals to precedent invalid. World War II Veterans, I believe, did not have access to work studies programs that often are a joke, or to other so-called college courses that today enable people to get A.A. degrees without learning much of anything in the process. In short, I believe it is time to begin drawing the line. We serve no one well--neither students, Veteran students, or taxpayers--by continuing to make it easier to get degrees that increasingly will be regarded with cynicism and contempt."

"The purpose of coming back to school after military service should be to obtain an education. The acquiring of knowledge and/or skills cannot be accomplished by granting credits which represent neither new knowledge nor new skills. Veterans who seek employment or degrees surely will find the 60 units required for the A.A. a minimum of preparation. I see no justification for granting any more than the current 2 units."

"I feel serving in the military is one of our duties as a citizen of this great nation. We should honor our Veterans with respect and appreciation but shouldn't give them an education just because they are Veterans. I fail to see how serving in the military can be directly related to training for a specific trade or profession."

Conclusions

Faculty sentiment is still overwhelmingly against raising military credit from two to six units. The general feeling is that automatically granting six units cheapens the degree. Many faculty, however, would accept a plan which grants the two units and then will accept additional units for formal documented training offered in the service.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

MAR 26 1976

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